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Department of English Studies, Faculty of Pedagogy and Fine Arts, Adam Mickiewicz University, Kalisz

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Success: From failure to failure with enthusiasm

Danuta Gabryś-Barker

University of Silesia, Sosnowiec, Poland

danuta.gabrys@gmail.com

Abstract

In this article I would like to look briefly at the background to the concept of enthusiasm, its evolution from earlier understandings in the domain of religion to its modern understandings as expressed by various lexicographic sources. This will lead me to the major focus of the article, which is the various applications of enthusiasm in education. Not surprisingly, there is a large body of empirical studies on teacher and learner enthusiasm and its contribution to successful teaching and learning. A selection of studies is presented here and their results are discussed. The empirical part of this article looks at my own qualitative study of pre-service EFL teachers' narratives and their perceptions of teacher enthusiasm and its impact on teaching and learning success, as seen from their own perspective. In the concluding part I suggest how teacher training should incorporate ideas on teacher enthusiasm and strategies to deploy them as prospective weapons in preventing professional burnout in teachers. As Churchill said, "success is not final . . . Failure is not fatal . . . it's the courage to continue that counts." I strongly believe that it is enthusiasm that gives us courage to continue.

Keywords: teacher enthusiasm, enthusiasm indicators, enthusiasm effectiveness, learner achievement, affectivity, teacher training, pre-service teachers

The mediocre teacher tells
The good teacher explains
The superior teacher demonstrates
The great teacher inspires
William Arthur Ward

1. Introduction

Winston Churchill defined success as “the ability to go from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm.” Ever since I was first involved in teaching, whether in a secondary or tertiary context, my attitude has been based on my passionate desire to be a teacher; this has generated my enthusiastic approach to the profession, my learners and also to the English language, with its rich culture. However, this enthusiasm has not always worked to my advantage as a teacher, nor has it to the advantage of my learners. I therefore decided to take a closer look at the phenomenon of enthusiastic teaching, not only experientially but also empirically through reviewing the available literature on the topic. At the same time, I was conducting my own study with pre-service teachers of EFL and successful EFL learners.

Also, when looking through various online sites advertising jobs for teachers of foreign languages, I observed that the most commonly used term, and thus the quality searched for by employers in their prospective employees, was *enthusiastic*:

- “Randstad Education are currently looking for an *enthusiastic* Modern FLs teacher to work in a successful High School in the Blackpool area” (www.ukjobs.com/language-teaching-jobs)
- “We welcome *enthusiastic* and qualified linguists” (www.educ.com.ac.uk)
- “Candidates must be *enthusiastic* about teaching” (www.ile.org/en/Programmes/FLTA)
- “We are looking for *enthusiastic* teachers who are committed to excellence” (www.jobs.theguardian-com/.../secondary-teaching/modern-foreign-languages) [emphasis added]

2. Defining *enthusiasm*: The evolution of the term

Etymologically, the word *enthusiasm* comes directly both from late Latin *enthusiasmus* and from a Greek word *enthousiasmos*, more precisely, deriving from an adjective *entheos* (‘having the god within’): *en* ‘in, within,’ *theos* ‘god.’ When tracing back the meaning of the term *enthusiasm*, we need to look as far back as ancient times when it meant divine possession. The person possessed by a god, for example Apollo or Dionysus, was called an enthusiast. Socrates referred to poetic inspiration as enthusiasm. So it denoted inspiration

instigated by unknown forces, by gods. Its religious connotations can be found in a sect in Syria in the 4th century, called *Enthusiasts* (also known as *Euchites*), who became renowned for indulging in religious prayers and contemplation, and aspiring to be possessed by the Holy Spirit. In the 16th and later 17th century *enthusiasm* continued to be used in a religious context, with reference to Protestants. However political changes in Britain, namely the English Civil War (1642-1651) and the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in England, changed the meaning of enthusiasm to become a strongly negative term used to describe any political or religious engagement. Later on, the collocation *blind enthusiasm* was applied to suggest fanaticism. The term was widely used in the 18th century to describe the Methodists, led by John Wesley.

In sum, the evolution of understanding of *enthusiasm* has moved from "possession by a god," "rapturous inspiration like that caused by god," "an overly confident or delusory belief that one is inspired by God" and "ill-regulated religious extremism" to modern understandings such as "craze, excitement, strong liking for something" (Enthusiasm, 2000).

Taking a closer look at the concept and its definitions in lexicographic sources, we will find a more detailed description of its nuances. Dictionary entries present enthusiasm as a feeling of excitement and the experiencing of affective and emotional states, such as overflowing with great enjoyment or approval. It is also referred to as a lively interest (Enthusiasm, n.d.). Thus the commonly used descriptive terms with reference to *enthusiasm* will be keenness, passion, excitement, but also warmth, motivation and devotion, interest, obsession or craze. So modern understandings of *enthusiasm* bring associations with positive feelings and focused engagement in a given action, subject or area of interest.

What meaning does enthusiasm have in the educational context? Does it always bring about positivity in teachers and learners? Does teacher enthusiasm result in the learner's more engaged and motivated attitude to learning and better achievement?

3. Teacher enthusiasm and related concepts

3.1. Teacher enthusiasm and its mechanisms

In various studies of teacher effectiveness and profiles of good teachers, their enthusiasm for the subject and enthusiasm for teaching it come to the fore as most significant traits. And as Metcalfe and Game (2006, p. 92) put it, "what good teachers have is passion. The spark. Sharing their passion. Kids pick up on their excitement, and that makes them curious." What good teachers have is enthusiasm, and it is generally believed that this enthusiasm influences students

directly in enhancing and developing their subject interests, motivation to learn it and attention, thereby indirectly affecting their learning achievement.

What is teacher enthusiasm? The complexity of the concept and variety of perspectives it brings to mind make it almost impossible to conceptualize enthusiasm consistently. For example, Kunter et al. (2008) assume that teacher enthusiasm is a personality trait expressed in certain affectively determined behaviours such as enjoyment, excitement and pleasure in performing classroom actions, deriving from teacher's intrinsic motivation, positive attitude and interest in the subject and teaching it. On the other hand, Collins' definition (1978) of teacher enthusiasm drawn from indicators focuses solely on the teacher's behavioural manifestations of enthusiasm, for example use of voice or non-verbal communication.

In the classroom context, enthusiasm expressed by a teacher will have different dimensions and will be context-specific. Enthusiasm for teaching itself and enthusiasm for the subject taught have to be treated as separate categories, with possibly different effects on learners and teachers themselves in different educational contexts, as demonstrated by the study of Kunter et al. (2011).

Theorists argue that three mechanisms are involved that make teacher enthusiasm an effective tool in the teacher's hands. First, teachers engage learners' attention through an appropriate presentation of input material, including items that are enthusiastic, engaging, innovative, person-related (Bettencourt, Gillett, Galland, & Hull, 1983). Second, a state of momentary emotional contagion is created when students exposed to expressive behaviours of a teacher subconsciously mimic his/her non-verbal behaviours (Mottet & Beebe, 2000). Third, teachers being treated as role models create a learning context in which imitative learning occurs; in other words, the teacher's intrinsic motivation is passed on to the learners in the form of expressive verbal and non-verbal behaviours of high engagement in a given task: The learners follow the teacher's behaviour.

Although no systematic scholarly work has described in detail the positive effects of teacher enthusiasm on learner achievement, research has demonstrated that it may serve as a variable conducive to attention-getting, motivation development and interest growth, all of which are conducive to learner achievement.

3.2. Other related concepts: Teacher presence, immediacy, flow, motivation and burnout syndrome

Teacher enthusiasm can be viewed in relation to other concepts which either include it, such as teacher presence, or contribute to it, such as teacher immediacy or flow. A teacher's success not only depends on effective methods of teaching and subject knowledge, but above all it depends on the strong relationship teachers develop with their students. These strong relationships are built upon

the teacher's understanding of the behaviour, motivation and personalities of the class, seen not only as a group but primarily as individuals with their own idiosyncrasies. This relationship is very much affective in nature and evolves dynamically to create *teacher presence* in the classroom (Gabrys-Barker, 2012).

Teacher presence is a multifaceted phenomenon. Anderson, Rourke, Garrison, and Archer (2001) define the concept of *teacher presence* as "the design, facilitation, and the direction of cognitive and social processes for the purposes of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes" (p. 5). Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) see it as a state of awareness and readiness to respond compassionately to individuals in the group and to the group as a whole. It therefore follows that the concept of *presence* in all its complexity relates not only to pedagogical relationships with students, but also to self-awareness and connection with the subject taught and pedagogical skills. *Teacher presence* in the classroom is a construct that derives from these relations and its nature depends on a variety of aspects on which these relations are built. These include:

- the way a teacher addresses his/her students (the degree of formality, remembering or always confusing their names, using register numbers, etc.);
- the way he/she uses his/her voice for different purposes such as establishing rapport, lecturing, assessing learners, praising and punishing (e.g., too loud a manner of speaking is overwhelming and too dominating);
- the teacher's involvement in his/her actions in and beyond the classroom context (genuine involvement in teaching and relating to the students), the degree of enthusiasm manifested, creativity and openness to learners' needs and idiosyncrasies;
- effective feedback given to the students on the level of acknowledgement feedback (a genuine communicative response) and informational feedback (evaluating students' performance) (Gabrys-Barker, 2012, p. 117).

Thus, it would be right to describe teacher involvement in the process of teaching and an enthusiastic approach to his/her professional development, performance and achievement as creating and enhancing thoughtful teaching and "scholarly passion" (Neumann 2006, p. 416). It is affectively marked and personal emotions are fundamental to passionate thoughts, leading to passionate involvement. Research in the area of student motivation demonstrates that teacher presence, seen as teacher involvement, is a significant factor in developing learners' motivation to learn and also be actively engaged in classroom processes (Gabrys-Barker, 2012).

Teacher immediacy is a concept that overlaps with the notion of presence. Teacher immediacy originated in communication studies and can be defined as "nonverbal behaviours that refer to physical and psychological closeness between people" (Keller, 2011, p. 13). Immediacy has a bearing on the rapport between a

teacher and his/her students and their degree of closeness and approachability or (their contraries) distance and intimidation. The subtle difference between immediacy and enthusiasm is worth noting. "Enthusiasm would seem to emphasize instructors' expressive style in teaching their subject matter, whereas immediacy would seem to centre on instructor-student interaction and closeness" (Babad, 2007, p. 223). However, there is not a sharp distinction between the two. Indeed they are best viewed as directly interrelated, as the rapport between the teacher and learner (immediacy) determines to a great extent the teacher's instructional style and vice versa. It is not an easy task to measure immediacy; however, tools of its measurement do exist. Teacher immediacy is traditionally investigated with Richmond, Gorham and McCroskey's (1987) instrument, which consists of non-verbal behaviour indicators such as movement and body position in the classroom, gestures used, occurrence of smiles, many of which are also indicators of teacher enthusiasm. Another tool of SLA research is the teacher immediacy scales of Noels (2001), used in studying learner motivation and autonomy as affected by teacher communication styles. Unfortunately, no research has so far been carried out to demonstrate the relation between teacher immediacy and enthusiasm.

In addition to the notions of presence and immediacy, enthusiasm has also a lot in common with the concept of *flow*, a key concept proposed in positive psychology by Csikszentmihalyi (1990). Flow is defined as a mental state of total immersion and absorption in what one does. It is characterised by high energy and focus on the task with all the positive emotions the task evokes in a person; it is an intense and focused motivation to perform a target task. Thus, it may be assumed that an enthusiastic person will be in the state of flow more often when engaged in a given activity/ performance, such as teaching, and taking a deep interest in a subject by actively searching to expand one's resources in and knowledge of this domain.

Flow represents a specific type of motivational state, and in general, some type of motivational state contributes to every human activity. However, with respect to teachers, Dörnyei (2001) observes that not much research to date has been done on teacher motivation. In his research work, he identifies four specific features of the motivation to teach: an intrinsic component, contextual factors, its fluctuating character and its fragility (Table 1).

Table 1 Specific features of motivation to teach (based on Dörnyei, 2001, pp. 156-165)

No.	Specific components of teacher motivation	Descriptive characteristics
1.	The intrinsic component	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teaching seen as vocation intrinsic rewards (teaching and working with young people, the subject taught and value of continuous expansion of knowledge, inner job satisfaction): personal efficacy fulfilling one's psychological needs to be autonomous, relatedness with others,

	competence (being successful in accomplishing the goal): teaching efficacy
2. The external (social context) component	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • macro-level: value attached to the profession by society, politicians, parents, etc. • micro-level: a particular institutional structure, standards and norms, climate, cooperation, degree of independence, etc.
3. The temporal component (fluctuating)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pursuing professional development: a planned career • choosing a contingent path (steps and stages in a career, hierarchy steps) • external motives (e.g., power, money, approval, etc.) • internal motives (development of knowledge, interest, success)
4. The fragility component (negative influences, motivational crisis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stress • impediment of independence and autonomy • lack of success (<i>insufficient self-efficacy</i>) • perception of intellectual stagnation • <i>inadequate career structure</i> (limited options)

Each of the components of motivation as delineated by Dörnyei can be seen as a possible source of teacher enthusiasm or a contrary, de-motivating force. Statistics (OECD, 2005, 2012) show that teacher dropout from the profession is high, which may be assumed to result from the above-mentioned negative influences the teachers are unable to cope with. Job satisfaction (or rather dissatisfaction) causes a significant dropout in the teaching profession.

A prolonged dissatisfaction with the teaching job and reaction to stressful experience, as in the case of other jobs, may lead to what is described in literature as burnout, that is, “feelings of physical depletion, helplessness, hopelessness, depressions, detachment and especially disillusionment” (Travers & Cooper, 1996, p. 30). The reasons causing burnout to occur are complex but generally it happens when failure is perceived as final and no hope of help and support from the outside is expected any more. It results from prolonged stress (Travers & Cooper, 1996). But more importantly burnout “is the result of unmet needs and unfulfilled expectations and occurs gradually over a period of time. It affects self-esteem. It is characterized by progressive disillusionment” (Travers & Cooper, 1996, p. 44).

Such an understanding of burnout and its symptoms suggests that, although an idiosyncratic phenomenon with by no means every teacher prone to experiencing it in the course of his/her career, it is quite widespread and one of the causes of professional dropout. However, awareness of the onset of its symptoms may prevent its occurrence. It may be assumed that cultivating teacher motivation (and the enthusiasm drawn from it) can lower the probability of a teacher’s sense of failure and the burnout resulting from it.

3.3. Teacher enthusiasm research

According to Dörnyei (2001), “the teacher’s level of enthusiasm and commitment is one of the most important factors that affect the learners’ motivation to

learn" (p. 156). Although research in enthusiasm in general is quite extensive (e.g. Abrams, 1990; Anderson & Holt-Reynolds, 1995; Bloch, 1986; Tucker, 1972), the growth of interest in teacher enthusiasm is more recent. The focus on teacher enthusiasm coincides with more investment in learner-centred classrooms due to humanistic psychology (Maslow, 1954) and its later application to the language classroom (Moskowitz, 1980). There also is a growing interest in redefining professional profiles in terms of teacher competence levels and effectiveness in the classroom. Although this research on teacher enthusiasm is developing, it is still not very systematic, tending to conceptualize the phenomenon differently and often produces contradictory findings. It uses teacher and learner rating questionnaires, direct participatory and non-participatory observations, and also experimental methods applying statistical analysis for example to determine the correlation between different aspects of enthusiasm and its effects. The existing confusion and contradictory findings of research on teacher enthusiasm stem mainly from the lack of a clear definition of the concept and thus various interpretations of it. Research on teacher enthusiasm seeks to conceptualize this complex phenomenon by taking two different approaches to it.

Prior research embraces various aspects of teacher enthusiasm and its effects, but is not very systematic in its approach to the concept and lacks replication studies. Rosenshine and Furst (1971) investigated teacher-behaviour variables affecting his/her effectiveness, showing that enthusiasm is the third most influential variable, after clarity and variability. One of the most significant areas of research on teacher enthusiasm looks at enthusiasm indicators identified as type of vocal delivery, eyes and gestures when teaching and their relation to learner achievement (Collins, 1978; Sanders & Gosenpud, 1986). It was observed that teacher enthusiasm had minimal effects on final scores and examination grades (Sanders & Gosenpud, 1986). Effects of teacher training in enthusiasm on student learning behaviour and achievement were investigated by Bettneourt, Gillett, Gallant, and Hull (1983). The study obtained rather disappointing results, showing the lack of influence that teacher enthusiasm training had on learner gains. On the other hand, it appeared that on-task behaviour was more evident in the case of teachers who were trained in enthusiasm techniques than in control group teachers. Stewart (1989) looked at the effects of teacher enthusiasm on lecture recall, which proved to be positive due to more effective information processing in an animated, enthusiastic lecture than in a merely factual one. Murphy and Walls (1994) exemplified the use of Collins' (1978) enthusiasm indicators by measuring expert teachers on the enthusiasm indicators scale, coming up with high scores for this group of teachers. Some other studies described profiles of influential teachers showing enthusiastic teachers as most valued by their learners and most effective

(Bauer, 2002; Dean, 2005; Stronge, 2007; Urban, 2008). This line of investigation was also followed by research on enthusiasm as an effective communication strategy which showed that enthusiastic teachers were perceived by learners not only as effective communicators (Killen, 2006) but that they also more effectively transmitted knowledge and motivated and stimulated their learners than their unenthusiastic counterparts (Feldman, 2007). In trying to determine predictors of students' intrinsic motivation and measuring them, Patrick, Hisley and Kempler (2000) demonstrated that enthusiasm is the best predictor of intrinsic motivation and vitality. It is not surprising that some researchers also looked at the influence of teacher enthusiasm on affectivity dimensions of the teaching/learning process (Frenzel, Goetz, Ludtke, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009) showing that enthusiasm is conducive to a positive classroom climate. Kunter, Frenzel, Nagy, Baymert and Pekrun (2011) observed that research on teacher enthusiasm has to take into consideration two different perspectives of the concept: enthusiasm for teaching and enthusiasm for the subject, showing that the former is more related to professional satisfaction and well-being, whereas the latter was independent of the specific teaching context. Missing from these studies is concern for subject specificity as a factor in enthusiasm and how it affects learners' enthusiasm as a result of interest in the given subject and its perceived degree of difficulty.

In her detailed study, Keller (2011) made an attempt to conceptualize and operationalize teacher enthusiasm by combining the two perspectives: the personality trait approach of Kunter et al. (2008) and behavioural concepts of teacher enthusiasm derived from Collins (1978). In fact, Keller's model embodies the belief that the "core" of enthusiasm lies in the teacher's personality that manifests itself in a certain behaviour which "depicts enjoyment and excitement toward the subject and teaching the subject. This core would manifest itself in expressive, enthusiastic teaching behaviours that are in turn observed and perceived by students, positively influencing their attitudes and affective and cognitive outcomes" (Keller, 2011, p. 139).

Importantly for practical purposes, research on teacher enthusiasm also defines its indicators and looks at the relation between teacher enthusiasm, learner motivation and learning achievement. It is observed that teaching enthusiasm clearly positively affects learner motivation and is a stimulation to work on a task more attentively; however, it does not clearly have a significant influence on learner achievement. The first researcher to take scholarly interest in defining indicators of teacher enthusiasm was Rosenshine (1970), who classified behavioural components of enthusiasm into high inference and low inference variables.

High inference variables measured behaviours that required considerable inferring from what was observed or heard in the classroom. They included variables such as mobility animation, energy or expressiveness. Low inference variables measured those behaviours that required an observer to classify teacher movement into objective categories, such as words per minute, amount of gesturing, or movements per minute. (as cited in Sanders & Gosenpud, 1986, p. 52)

Rosenshine's study (1970) using independent observers showed that high scores on both types of ratings—high and low inference variables—relate positively to the learners' learning achievement and their rapport with both the teacher and the learning task. Sanders and Gosenpud (1986), who adapted Rosenshine's scale as the *Enthusiasm Awareness Index*, came up with contrary results which showed no significant correlation between teacher enthusiasm and a university student's achievement in final grades and tests. However, the study did not dismiss the significance of teacher enthusiasm, but concluded with the belief that it may have a more longitudinal effect, and that it may also correlate with the age of a learner. The previous studies carried out in primary and secondary schools were based on immature learners for whom teacher enthusiasm may be a stimulating factor, whereas in the case of tertiary level students, it may not be such an effective variable.

It seems that more rigorous study of teacher enthusiasm started with defining its indicators in the already mentioned research by Collins (1978) and it still remains to be one of the most influential works aiming to identify the indicators of teacher enthusiasm. Collins defined enthusiasm indicators as specific use of vocal delivery, eyes, gestures, high energy levels and responsiveness to learners' ideas and feelings (Table 2).

Table 2 Enthusiasm indicators and their description (based on Collins, 1978, p. 53)

Indicator	Description
Vocal delivery	Great and sudden changes from rapid excited speech to a whisper, lilting, uplifting intonations, many changes in tone, pitch
Eyes	Dancing, snapping, shining, lighting up, frequently opened wide, eyebrows raised, eye contact with total group
Gestures	Frequent demonstrative movements of body, head, arms, hands and face, sweeping motions, clapping hands, head nodding rapidly
Movements	Large body movements, swings around, changes pace, bends body
Facial expression	Appears vibrant, demonstrative, changes denoting surprise, sadness, joy, thoughtfulness, awe, excitement
Word selection	Highly descriptive, many adjectives, great variety
Acceptance of ideas and feelings	Accepts ideas and feelings quickly with vigor and animation, ready to accept, praise, encourage or clarify in a non-threatening manner, many variations in responding to pupils
Overall energy	Explosive, exuberant, high degree of vitality, drive and spirit throughout lesson

These indicators are not only widely used in research studies on enthusiasm (e.g., Bettencourt et al. 1983; Patrick et al., 2000) but also in more practical teacher training contexts. For example, at Penn State College of Education (Philadelphia, USA), it is used as a form of evaluation of pre-service teachers (Lunsford, 2011). Enthusiasm indicators are assessed on a 5-point Likert scale divided into low, medium and high level of enthusiasm measurement (Table 3).

Table 3 Teacher Enthusiasm Scale (based on Lunsford, 2011).

Indicator/Level	Low	Medium	High
Vocal delivery	Monotonous voice, minimum vocal inflection, little variation in speed of speech, drones on and on, poor articulation	Pleasant variations of pitch, volume and speed, good articulation, uplifting intonation, many changes in tone and pitch	Great sudden changes from rapid excited speech to a whisper, varied
Eyes	Look dull or bored, seldom opens wide or raises eyebrows	Appears interested, occasionally light up, shining, opening wide	Characterised by dancing, snapping, shining, lighting up, eyebrows occasionally raised
Gestures	Seldom moves arms out or stretches out towards person or object, never uses sweeping movements, keeps arms at side or folds across body, appears rigid	Often points with hand, using total arm; occasionally uses sweeping motion using body, head, arms, hands and face; steady pace of gesturing is maintained.	Quick and demonstrative movements of body, head, arms, hands and face (e.g., clapping hands, head nodding rapidly)
Facial expression	Appears deadpan, does not denote feeling or frowns most of the time, little smiling or one-second lip upturns, lips closed	Agreeable, smiles frequently, longer and at a regular rate, looks pleased/happy/sad when obviously called for, mouth open, quick and sudden changes in expression	Appears vibrant, demonstrative, shows surprise, awe, sadness, joy, thoughtfulness, excitement, total smile
Body movement	Seldom moves from one spot or movement mainly from a sitting to a standing position	Moves freely, slowly, and steadily	Large body movements, swings around, walks rapidly, changes pace, unpredictable, energetic

So the question is: Will these teacher enthusiasm indicators be also found in the responses of the subjects in the present study, namely university students who are at the same time pre-service EFL teachers?

4. Pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of enthusiasm

4.1. Description of the study

The main reason for conducting this study was not to find out about teacher enthusiasm as such but to determine pre-service teachers' perceptions of it. Únal and Únal (2012) demonstrated in their study that pre-service and novice teachers

are more enthusiastic than their more experienced colleagues. Thus, this study was carried out with a group of 50 trainee teachers of EFL in their third and fourth years of study at the university following the foreign language teacher training program of studies. The choice of the study group was determined by my professional context. As a FL teacher trainer I am concerned with improvement and introduction of new training modules and topics. Teacher enthusiasm has not been discussed in the program of training so far. My trainees have a role in the choice of topics discussed and studied in their action research projects. The needs analysis conducted pointed to enthusiasm as one of areas of trainees' interest.

The trainee students in this study were either actively involved in teaching practice at different levels of schools (primary, secondary and language schools) or taught as novices a limited number of English lessons a week on a regular basis. They also gave private tutorials to school learners. All of them were instructed in TEFL methodology and had completed a course in psycho-pedagogy. At the moment of data collection, they were also involved in individual action research diploma projects required for the completion of their academic BA and MA degrees.

The present study is qualitative and its general focus is on the following issues related with teacher enthusiasm:

1. The students' perceptions of what teacher enthusiasm is
2. Indicators of teacher enthusiasm in a classroom context
3. The effects of enthusiasm on learners and teachers themselves

The tool used for the elicitation of the students' views was a reflective narrative text called *Teacher enthusiasm and its role in his/her teaching process and learners' achievement* (350 words). The students were instructed to comment on the above issues (1-3) taking into account their own learning perspective, teaching practice and not necessarily what they had learned in their course of study to be teachers in the near future.

4.2. Sample narratives

4.2.1. Defining teacher enthusiasm

The narratives open with a definition of teacher enthusiasm. Here, the respondents are mainly concerned with the affective aspects of a teacher's instructional style and treat teacher enthusiasm in the majority of cases as a personality trait which expresses itself in a positive attitude to learners, openness and willingness to help, and being compassionate about working with students. The following samples illustrate this understanding of teacher enthusiasm:

. . . and attitude of a teacher towards the lesson itself as well as the learners . . . It's also important for the students to notice that the teacher is fascinated with the language, the students like to know that the teacher tries to develop his/her own language competence, too. (Student 8)

Teacher enthusiasm means also his/her willingness to self-develop. (Student 34)

This term encapsulates such components as creativity, involvement, self-development, self-education, and being student friendly. (Student 38)

An enthusiastic teacher is someone who motivates learners and facilitates their learning. It should be a person whose attitude towards the language is positive and convincing. In this sense, enthusiastic does not mean excited or passionate about the language but being supportive and showing a lively interest (towards students). (Student 14)

Enthusiasm is positive feelings and emotions. (Student 33)

Very few definitions offered by the students combine both the person-like and behavioural perspective on teacher enthusiasm:

Teacher enthusiasm may be identified as a teacher behaviour that influences students' learning to some extent. Enthusiastic behaviour may be described as both positive verbal and non-verbal behaviours which convey the teacher's attitude to the students. (Student 3)

To begin with, teacher enthusiasm may be defined as a positive attitude towards teaching, the language itself, students and the material being taught. What is more, this enthusiasm strongly refers to teacher's character, whether she or he is friendly and is able to motivate students and convince them that they are successful. Also showing passion for teaching is a key to success . . . (Student 15)

4.2.2. Indicators of teacher enthusiasm

As in the case of conceptualising teacher enthusiasm, when identifying the indicators of teacher enthusiasm, the participants again focus on personality features of a teacher in the first instance:

Firstly, when the teacher is an energetic, happy and competent person and when he/she sends positive vibes, which influence the learner directly . . . Teacher enthusiasm can also include praising the student. (Student 5)

For me as a learner, a teacher shows enthusiasm when he/she is willing to help students and is open to their problems and questions . . . enthusiastic teachers are often fulfilled people who love what they do. It can be noticed at first glance. They are optimistic and often have a positive, smiling face expression. (Student 9)

An enthusiastic teacher is usually a person who has a good contact with his/her students, gives them positive feedback and encourages them to gain knowledge or learn a language. (Student 36)

Being student-friendly means that the teacher understands students' needs and treats them equally. A smile is important. So is a sense of humour. (Student 38)

A lot of attention is paid in teacher training these days to developing autonomy, both in the case of learners and teachers. This, to some extent, comes from the great emphasis put on reflectivity in teaching. This is visibly demonstrated in the comments the trainees make on teacher enthusiasm, which is perceived as facilitation of learner autonomy by accepting learners' ideas and feelings and the teacher's willingness to self-develop:

An enthusiastic teacher will also be more flexible and more willing to modify the lesson. As he is not tied to the syllabus, he is more likely to improve learners' autonomy. (Student 37)

An enthusiastic teacher is motivated to improve his/her methods of teaching, he is involved in lessons. H/she tries to be creative and make attractive lessons. An enthusiastic teacher does not perceive his/her mistakes as failures but a motivating force to improve . . . An enthusiastic teacher arouses curiosity in learners, does not show or explain everything but lets the students discover things . . . encourages students to look for language exposure outside the classroom. (Student 7)

Teacher enthusiasm can also be manifested by varying the tasks and activities in the classroom. Such a variety displays teacher engagement in organising interesting classes . . . An enthusiastic teacher is not only able to invent and introduce his/her new, interesting ideas but also to take students' suggestions into account and make practical use of them. (Student 9)

I would not say that this type of a teacher has to be "funny," good-looking, non-stop smiling but I would rather say demanding but flexible in order to interest learners and take into consideration their needs and abilities. (Student 10)

Additionally, the attitude to learners in terms of emphasis on their success, on positive features of learners and feedback given are seen as significant aspects of teacher enthusiasm:

An enthusiastic teacher also provides learners with feedback in a non-threatening way . . . from the perspective of a FL learner, I may say that learners almost always respond with enthusiasm to an enthusiastic teacher and therefore learning a FL is a pleasant experience for them. (Student 12)

An enthusiastic teacher stresses good points and strengths of learners rather than focusing only on weak points and failures. He/she believes in students doing their best and emphasises what they can do and not what they cannot do. (Student 13)

Whenever the teacher is truly enthusiastic about teaching, he makes a lesson a personal experience for himself and for the learners. Learners can feel it. (Student 46)

Such teachers are more likely to have a more personal attitude to learners. They will try to perceive them individually and to help them accordingly. (Student 37)

Only two essays mention teacher enthusiasm as demonstrated by non-verbal communication:

It may be indicated by varying one's voice, the tone and volume to catch students' attention, using one's body language like clapping one's hands or giving students signals of approval and by facial expressions such as smiling, shown one's happiness or encouragement. (Student 3)

Teacher enthusiasm can be seen in his body language. Body language is something we cannot cheat on. (Student 46)

Comparing the indicators enumerated by the subjects with Collins' (1978) indicators, not all of them play a role in students' conceptualizations of teacher enthusiasm. For example, *voice delivery, the use of eye contact, appropriate face expressions or movement in the classroom space* hardly figure in the comments and they are present in only two examples. Non-verbal signs of enthusiasm are important as they are most obviously perceived by the learners and contribute to various aspects of the learning process: attention getting and clarification of meaning, not to ignore their more important affective effects. However, they do not seem to be surfacing in the trainees' comments. On the other hand, the students' comments abound in personality features relating to overall energy levels, positive emotions and openness to students as a way of facilitating their classroom performance. Teacher enthusiasm is also very strongly marked here in the perception of the professional qualifications of a teacher as a language instructor and user. Seen as major indicators, included here are self-development, creativity and teacher autonomy.

4.2.3. The effectiveness of teacher enthusiasm: The age factor

One of the most significant observations made in the student narratives is that participants perceive teacher enthusiasm to be strongly age-related (both the age of learners and of teachers), which hardly features in theoretical concep-

tualisations and research studies. Enthusiasm is seen as significant independent of learner age; however, its importance in respect of the indicators needs to be adapted to learner age:

Teacher enthusiasm is important in each age group. Children because they are focused on "here and now" have to be enthusiastic all the time. Adolescent are in an age of transition, confusion and self-consciousness, therefore their complex problems can be solved by praising their self-esteem and self-image by enthusiastic teachers. Adults have to be intrigued by the teacher because of the little time for lessons they have, their insecurity can be reduced by teacher enthusiasm. (Student 23)

As I noticed, novice teachers are more excited about their work. They would like to improve the curriculum and syllabus and use different teaching styles . . . An enthusiastic teacher is very important for children. Children pay attention to eye contact and gestures. When the teacher is smiling and nice, they are motivated to learn . . . I believe that these physical aspects are important and can be developed by teachers. Teacher enthusiasm is also important for teenagers, who would like to see an interesting presentation of a topic. (Student 20)

The participants in this study, all pre-service teachers, are still very young, in fact in their early twenties. They see themselves as full of ideas and open to change, which they seem to be voicing very strongly, as the last comment demonstrates clearly.

4.2.4. The effects of enthusiasm on learners and teachers themselves

Teacher enthusiasm is perceived as having effects on both learners and the teacher himself/herself. In the case of learners, its impact is on learners' affective functioning, creating positive energy and positive attitudes to learning, teachers and the subject:

It is easier to memorise something when it is connected with some emotions and has some influence on our mood and feelings. (Student 33)

Enthusiasm encourages learners' achievement. (Student 22)

Why is enthusiasm so effective? I think that it may be because when students are engaged in the lesson they remember more. Students' attention is held longer. Teacher's enthusiasm shows that the subject can be interesting, grammar does not have to be boring, and the learning process may be fun and pleasure. (Student 20)

. . . What is more, enthusiastic teachers often prepare their students for different competitions and they enjoy taking part in school events . . . such teachers enjoy

working with students which has a positive influence on learners' attitude towards language learning. Students are eager to work and they achieve good results. In my opinion enthusiastic teachers are successful teachers. (Student 19)

As a result of teacher enthusiasm, learners become more motivated and autonomous in their learning:

This characteristic develops the learners' and teachers' autonomy and "working on themselves." (Student 20)

Students who have enthusiastic teachers are more likely to study outside of the school . . . It can influence a classroom atmosphere. If it is full of energy and positive attitude, students' interest and excitement in language learning may increase. Enthusiastic teacher's presentation of material shows that he or she is a dedicated teacher and wants his/her students to understand and get to higher proficiency levels. (Student 6)

Another significant feature of effective teaching is the relationship developed between teachers and their learners. It is a teacher's enthusiastic instructional style that builds the rapport conducive to learning:

It can also influence their attitude towards school as a whole. Enthusiasm is very important in student-teacher relationship because lesson success is based mostly on the relation they have built with the teacher. (Student 27)

Teacher enthusiasm can influence his or her relations with students. They become more confident to talk with the teacher and ask questions. (Student 6)

Teacher-learner rapport which is conducive to learning results from a facilitative classroom atmosphere free of coercion and threat:

Teacher enthusiasm can contribute to learners' achievement because they are not threatened and they are not afraid to use the language and speak during the lesson . . . An enthusiastic teacher helps students to be autonomous and learn on their own. The teacher with a positive attitude creates an atmosphere without stress and without negative impact on students. I think that teacher enthusiasm is very important in the learning process but also in the process of teaching. (Student 30)

Enthusiasm of the teacher leads to good classroom atmosphere which encourages reflection and learner initiative. (Student 24)

By being enthusiastic, teachers are believed not only to create positive motivations and attitudes but also to contribute to the formation of their learners' personalities:

Teacher enthusiasm is visible not only in students' motivation and their attitude to the subject but it is evident as well in students' personal growth and development. When students notice teacher enthusiasm related to their actions and classroom behaviour, students' level of self-confidence increases, and simultaneously their level of anxiety decreases. (Student 25)

First of all, teacher's enthusiasm prompts learner's engagement in the subject, lesson or the whole course. Students are often infected with enthusiasm by the teacher . . . Secondly, teacher's enthusiasm is the main reason why learners want to attend the classes. Nobody wants to be in the class where there is a sad, bored and non-vigorous tutor. Classroom climate full of enthusiasm and energy should prevail in the classroom because then students' motivation to learn increases. (Student 4)

The instructional style of enthusiastic teachers, which presupposes their more intensive engagement in lesson preparation, affects the learners' own engagement in the lesson:

It may contribute to the increase of students' interest by novelty, variety and surprise of an enthusiastic presentation of the material prepared by the teacher. (Student 3)

Starting with the positive effects, it can be said that it enriches teacher's lessons. The teacher who is enthusiastic is more motivated to work, to experiment and to employ novel elements in his/her lessons . . . One of the examples can be resigning from frontal teaching to encourage learners to work in pairs or groups. (Student 47)

For a learning process to occur, students should be excited and surprised . . . Teachers who are bored with their job are de-motivation for students. Only someone who is enthusiastic and loves his job will be creative and interesting partner in the teacher-learner relation. (Student 45)

Students like and tend to admire enthusiastic teachers. As one of the respondents says: *"When a teacher creates his positive, enthusiastic attitude, it leads to the students' desire to copy and follow the teacher in gaining knowledge with enthusiasm"* (Student 40).

Their enthusiasm also significantly affects teachers themselves, as it helps them to be more effective in their instructional practices:

Teacher enthusiasm can have an impact on students' achievement but also on his or her success as a FL teacher. When teachers like their work, they are full of energy, they can work more effectively. (Student 29)

An enthusiastic teacher will spend more time on preparation of his classes than a teacher who feels forced to work as a teacher and takes no pleasure in it. (Student 27)

Enthusiasm is responsible for teacher's attitude towards his/her work. It makes teacher more eager to organise additional lessons and to develop oneself. (Student 47)

Being enthusiastic towards one's own work and the positive energy exuded add to teachers' positive affective functioning and their ability to cope and overcome difficulties:

Teacher's positive attitude lowers his/her stress level and if a teacher feels secure in his/her classroom, they can be more creative, because their imagination and knowledge are not blocked by stress. (Student 29)

It may also prevent monotony and frustration often caused by stress and ineffectiveness of teaching methods (or rather their inappropriate use). Moreover, it leads to personal growth, evokes inspiration and creativity, being flexible and ready for the unexpected as well as having rewards from one's own experience. (Student 22)

Working as a teacher is not only tiring, but also very demanding and has an impact on private life. Being enthusiastic may bring some ease and make this work slightly more interesting . . . Enthusiasm is a part of teacher presence in the classroom . . . From my short experience, I can admit that sometimes even one enthusiastic reaction, involvement in learners' speech with a smile on my face was priceless. For a student and for me. A frank "thank you" and a positive attitude towards me was unforgettable. (Student 44)

According to the participants, growing professional awareness and the need for constant professional development also result from enthusiasm for teaching: *"Enthusiasm plays a motivational role and facilitates teacher autonomy and self-development"* (Student 31). *"Positive thinking encourages the need to develop; it shows the sense of teacher's work and performance"* (Student 22).

As the last aspect, teacher enthusiasm may also be a positive feature in other than the teaching context:

The last advantage I would like to write about is that teacher enthusiasm is helpful in daily life when we end our work and go back home with the sense that we did our best as teachers and we are not tired. (Student 33)

4.2.5. The dangers of teacher enthusiasm

Some respondents, while acknowledging the positive aspects of teacher enthusiasm, also strongly emphasize its dangers for both learners and the teachers themselves. These dangers are registered in feelings of uncertainty that learners may have when exposed to an over-enthusiastic teacher solely focused on his/her presentation and not paying enough attention to students' reactions:

He or she may cause the students "to alienate," to think that the teacher's perspective is so different and strange that the learners are not able to relate to it. The subject and the teacher may be, therefore, labelled as "peculiar" and the high level of enthusiasm can be detrimental to the learning process. (Student 17)

Enthusiastic teachers are also perceived as sometimes having unrealistic expectations of their learners, possibly expecting them to match their own interest and level of involvement:

It is generally believed that teacher enthusiasm should be enormous as it reveals their positive attitude to work. However too much enthusiasm can affect negatively the process of teaching when the teacher and students can be too motivated to achieve success, which they are not able to achieve. (Student 25)

Flexibility and openness to change, which were mentioned as indicators of enthusiastic teachers, are not always conducive to effective teaching according to selected narratives:

The friendly and humorous relationship with the students can lead to discipline problems. What is more, teachers willingness to modify his plans can lead to a rather chaotic lesson, when students can lose track of what is happening. (Student 37)

If there is too much of it, the lesson will become chaotic and it will lack discipline. Also enthusiasm will be depleted more quickly. (Student 38)

As studies show, it is not enthusiasm alone but enthusiasm together with the feedback the teacher gives which are a necessary combination, otherwise: *"When the teacher is over-enthusiastic, learners can feel oppressed and dominated by the teacher, his/her eagerness and flow of ideas"* (Student 47).

One of the participants expresses his concern that enthusiastic teachers are so cognitively (work load preparation) and affectively engaged in their classroom instruction that their enthusiasm would naturally tend to dissipate with time: *"The teacher that spends a lot of his time on additional classes can quickly burn out his enthusiasm . . . Enthusiasm can be seen as a finite resource and that wise management of that resource is needed"* (Student 37).

4. Conclusions: Enthusiasm in teacher training

This article demonstrates varied understandings of enthusiasm in general and its indicators in a teaching context. The studies overviewed demonstrate how teacher enthusiasm affects learning outcomes, which is mostly done through creating a positive classroom atmosphere, appropriate rapport between a

teacher and his/her learners, but also by bringing about more learner engagement and attention during the lesson and thus indirectly bringing about learner achievement. The article also elaborated on pre-service teachers' awareness of the nature of teacher enthusiasm and their own beliefs about its significance. The implications of the study conducted are formulated here with a view to proposing how teacher enthusiasm can be fostered as a more expressive style of teaching, resulting in more enthusiastic teaching. Alternatively, it can be reinforced in prospective teachers when introduced to teacher training programmes for pre-service teachers in the course of their studies.

Although the scholarly literature does not produce a clear conceptualization of teacher enthusiasm, tending to look at it from two distinct perspectives, this does not matter much for practical classroom—and training—purposes. We as teacher trainers might believe that we have less influence on developing enthusiasm understood as a personality trait. In practice, however, even in this domain there is scope for influencing trainees' intrinsic motivation and attitude towards the language itself and even more for developing a positive attitude to teaching it.

At the same time, we have a great opportunity to help our trainees become more expressive (and thus be perceived as enthusiastic), focusing on developing their verbal and non-verbal expressive behaviours in class. Adapting a more expressive style of teaching will influence learners' motivation and thus, as mentioned earlier, it may also result in more enjoyment of teaching and the teacher becoming more enthusiastic (Frenzel et al., 2009). This behavioural aspect of enthusiasm does not seem to feature in pre-service teachers' narratives, so we might start by making our trainees aware of the behavioural indicators of enthusiasm and their own experience of this as learners and novices in teaching. I believe that pre-service teachers, still students themselves, can find a valuable resource in their own learning experiences and how they felt about their own teachers in the past, and reflect on the extent to which those teachers and their enthusiasm influenced their choice of a professional career. Reflective narratives are yet another form of experiential learning for future teachers and a valid source of information for us as teacher trainers.

I propose a behavioural training program that should help trainees to develop:

- *verbal indicators* demonstrating a teacher's acceptance of ideas and feelings (which are both spontaneous and animated);
- ways of praising, clarifying and giving feedback in an unthreatening manner;
- ways of using *proxemics* and making the trainees aware of the role of position in space, demonstrating closeness, interest and involvement as op-

- posed to power and domination, and how to change position (movement in space, entering learners' spatial zone to demonstrate closeness);
- expression of teacher's *physical animation* (co-verbal behaviour) as demonstrated by eye contact, facial expressions, gestures (for different functions) and changes of posture (expressing attitude, interest, involvement);
 - *vocal animation* (paralanguage) demonstrated in a teacher's intonation, variation in vocal tones (volume, pitch, quality);
 - strategic use of voice (emphasis, attention getting, signalling important points), which can become the focus of training;
 - the importance of *overall energy, drive and spirit* throughout the lesson, which may constitute an additional topic for discussion of teacher enthusiasm.

The enjoyment of teaching is demonstrated in enthusiastic teaching and, as one respondent affirms, "*if the teacher enjoys teaching, students will enjoy learning*" (Sandra, Student 6). There is arguably a direct relation between teacher enthusiasm and learner enthusiasm. I strongly believe that enthusiasm is in the final analysis contagious, as are other affective states expressed in teacher-learner classroom rapport (Frenzel et al., 2009; Hargreaves, 2000; Keller, Neumann, & Fischer, 2013). My firm belief is that the art of successful teaching consists in evoking learner enthusiasm. For, as Churchill also said, "success is not final . . . failure is not fatal . . . it's the courage to continue that counts." It is enthusiasm that gives teachers the energy and the courage to go on and which is transmitted to our learners to give them the will to persist and succeed in their learning efforts.

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